

TASK 2

**Assist the Local Governments in Tirana and Durres in Priority Infrastructure Projects
Development, Securing Donors Funding and Adopting Effective Citizens Participation
Strategy**

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I INTRODUCTION

Under Task I of the Project opportunities for implementation of Short-Term Investment Program in Albania were identified. In that respect a long list of infrastructure projects has been developed for each of the project cities, Durrës and Tirana. These were presented in the Task I report by sector, roads, sewers, water, etc. Simultaneously, the assessment of donor organizations operating in Albania and meeting the criteria set for the short-term investment project participation was carried out. The Task I assessment suggested high potential for success in proceeding with subsequent tasks of Project implementation. The Action Plan for Task II was developed and the field work of a project team was carried out during the period of June 8 through June 27, 1998.

One important implication stemming out of the decision to go forward with the next phase of Project implementation was the necessity for a quick mobilization of the Citizen Participation Specialist. The complete success of the project can only be achieved if its goals and objectives, as well as the active role of local governments is recognized by the citizens, if the citizens understand how they are benefiting from the project and if they take on an active ownership in the product, thus sustaining the achieved results and preventing looting of newly created public property. The assessment of citizen participation issue and the strategy for implementation of effective program within the scope of this project has been prepared. A number of steps on development a citizen participation model have been completed under Task II and are described in Chapter III of this report.

Significant progress has been achieved in short-term projects development and in further strengthening of cooperation with donor organizations interested in funding project implementation phase. Under Task II, the project team has begun the process of prioritizing the projects with the highest City priorities, and which fall within specific donor programs identified under Task I. As presented in Chapter II, some projects have been judged to be emergencies and have quickly been packaged for implementation, while others are proceeding at a more structured

pace toward implementation. Subsequently, investment packages containing project descriptions, preliminary designs and cost estimates have been prepared for the selected short-term infrastructure projects and submitted to interested cooperating donors. This Task II program has targeted the general needs of each City plus participation in specific high priority project areas identified in Task I. The Citizen Participation Program may add projects to the long list, qualifying them for further prioritization.

Among most promising cooperating donor organizations are EU Phare, Cross Border Cooperation (CBC), Italian Cooperation along with project implementation units or NGOs such as Albanian Development Foundation (ADF), EU ECHO and Premier Urgence. Upon completion of Task II project development activity all of those organizations have received the prioritized lists of improvement projects for the Cities of Durres and Tirana. In addition the CBC/ADF and the EU Phare/ECHO have been provided with requested infrastructure investment packages for the specific projects. More detailed information on project development and on donor funding is provided in Chapter II.

The conclusions and recommendations arising from recent project experience are summarized in Chapter III and the proposed Action Plan for the balance of the activities under the contract (Task III) is provided in Chapter IV.

2 PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING

2.0 Project Development and Funding Status

At the conclusion of Task I each City received a copy of their long list of projects and were asked to begin evaluating them and assigning priorities. During Task II of the project, the project team returned to each city and held further meetings with the mayors and their staffs to obtain their input. Based on City input and more detailed evaluation, the projects in each City have been listed on the Projects Summary Table by overall priority. The tables include technical status, funding status, current cost estimate and comments regarding the individual project. The Short-Term Investment Projects Tables for the Cities of Tirana and Durres are presented in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

2.1 Durres

General: The Task I long list of short-term projects in Durres included 32 projects, having an estimated total cost of \$2,105,800. The projects were presented by sector including roads, City cleaning, sewers, water distribution, urban planning and City greening. Discussions with the mayor and his staff indicated that the Ring Road and cleaning the sewer system remain the top priorities.

First Priority

Sewer Projects: Sewer systems in Durres continue to be a major City-wide problem. Without a structured plan of cleaning and maintenance, the situation will only get worse. The existing cleaning truck, provided under the World Bank project is fully utilized for emergency blockages. A major upgrade of sewage pumping stations is being implemented by the EU Phare program. Tenders are being issued in July 98 and construction should begin in the fall. This would be a good opportunity to improve the sewers to take full advantage of the upgraded pumping stations. Cost estimate for sewer cleaning includes \$300,000 for equipment and \$80,000 for technical assistance. The \$80,000 TA is for planning a cleaning program, supervision of the field program and assistance in preparing a sewer system map.

Ring Road: The Ring Road continues to be a major focus of the City. The north residential area is expanding rapidly, placing greater pressure on the city to extend services to these residents. The project team met with the director of public works and performed a more detailed inspection of the road alignment. During Task I the City had assumed that only minor improvements to the drainage system would be required. Our field inspection indicated this was not the case and that significant drainage work would be required. The existing drainage canal has been filled in several locations by the informal development. This has caused areas of standing water and flooding of the roadway. The flooding along with the heavy traffic has damaged the roadway sub-base which must be replaced once the drainage has been restored.

The new Ring Road should be designed to incorporate the planned and unplanned North residential area. This includes intersections with existing or future roads, piped drainage at intersections, water taps for future water main extensions, sanitary sewer connections and sidewalks.

The only potential funding for the Ring Road is the European Union Cross Border Cooperation Program (CBC). Project priorities for this program were established in 1996 and included the Entrance Road and the Ferry Access road within the Port of Durres. Based on 1996 priorities the Ring Road was not included. In addition to the CBC program, there are two other large projects scheduled for implementation in the fall of 1998, reconstruction of the Port of Durres and the major intersection of the Durres-Tirana Road. During a meeting held with the CBC, the Project Team learned that paving the Ferry Access road, with a \$150,000 budget, has been integrated into the Port and Interchange projects. According to CBC staff, the CBC Ferry Road budget may be re-allocated to the Ring Road, based on updated City priorities.

In addition to the possibility of re-allocating the Ferry Road Budget, a portion of the Entrance Road Budget could also be transferred to the Ring Road. The Entrance road budget includes some drainage work that the City has completed on their own and some areas of lower priority work. For instance, the existing pavement from the railway station to Commercial Street is in better condition than the remainder of the road and may need only patching rather than a complete paving overlay. There is also the possibility that the Interchange Project will include some work on the eastern end of the entrance road.

In consideration of all these issues, we have discussed with the CBC executive director the potential of reviewing the CBC program prior to final design by the Albanian Development Foundation (ADF). He has agreed in principle with a re-allocation of the CBC funds to use the un-used Ferry Road budget and a portion of the Entrance Road budget to build all or a portion of the Ring Road. In order to process such a re-allocation of funds, the CBC must receive an official request from the Mayor of Durres. The Project Team has drafted a letter for the Mayor's signature making this request for CBC re-allocation (Refer to Appendix 3).

Other First Priority Projects: In addition to the sewer cleaning program, Ring Road and Entrance Road, sewer extensions in the north residential area, city cleaning (solid waste) and the Shkozet industrial road complete the projects in the first priority category. The City cleaning project is a group of small projects with budgets of \$1,800 to \$94,000. This City jobs program includes cleaning of public areas, beaches and the waste dumped along the landfill access road. The largest project in the group is the cleanup of the football stadium area which has become a dumping ground for construction and demolition waste. These projects would most likely require an NGO to administer the funds and oversee the implementation.

The Shkozet industrial road has been placed in the first priority category due to the potential of joint funding with the individual owners of businesses along the road. This will require a local

business association or NGO to integrate this funding into the project. Without the local sharing of these costs, the project should be placed in the second priority category.

Second Priority Projects: Projects in the second priority category include road paving in the north residential area, paving of Tower Square, the North Beach Road improvements, sewer repairs near the post office and the Kavije pipeline project. The Tower Square paving and the North Beach Road improvements are in commercial areas which will mostly benefit businesses and upper income groups.

Third Priority Projects: All of the planning projects and greening projects have been placed in the third or lowest priority category. Although these projects would be highly visible their environmental, public safety and health impacts are minimal. The need for planning is possibly the City's highest general priority, especially in the northern residential area, but it does not fit into the high impact, short term criteria of this program.

2.2 Tirana

General: A total of 28 projects were identified during Task I, with a total estimate of \$3,360,000. Although there were fewer projects identified in Tirana than in Durres, the Tirana projects were in general, larger than those identified in Durres. As in Durres, cleaning of the existing sewer system is the City's highest priority, followed by several sewer and water projects.

First Priority Projects

Kodra Priftit: The Kodra Priftit area is a top priority for the City. The area is drained by two open channels. A portion of these channels has been piped under a previous contract, but funding was not sufficient to complete the project. The general area includes a hilly portion where residents have formed neighborhood groups to install their own water and sewer connections with assistance from the water and sewer enterprises. The local sewers drain into the two open channels. Sewage flow in these channels is increasing and the channels are a major source of odors and health related problems.

The lower area of Koder Priftit does not have sewer service and most residents use septic holes. The proposed project will include large diameter main sewers to eliminate the two open sewage channels. Smaller diameter collector sewers will be installed to serve the low areas and eliminate the use of septic holes.

Koder Kamza: The two water supply projects in Koder Kamza and Laknas are considered emergencies by the City and are proceeding into implementation with EU funding through ECHO. Major water outages and resultant health impacts are forecast for this summer if these projects are not undertaken. The USAID Short-Term Investments Project is packaging these two

projects through the preliminary design phase. Implementation through ECHO will be processed through the NGO Premier Urgence. A separate design report with preliminary design drawings was completed by the end of June 1998, with construction scheduled for August.

Equipment: In addition to the emergency projects in Kamza and Laknas, the Tirana water enterprise has prepared a list of equipment, including pipe, valves, fittings and small tools needed to perform system maintenance. The Italian Cooperation Fund has distributed this list to municipalities in Italy and will oversee obtaining these materials and shipping them to the Tirana water enterprise.

Solid Waste: Solid waste is also a high priority for the City of Tirana. Two solid waste projects are included in the first priority and two are included in the second priority. The City currently has two privatization contracts which are not being efficiently performed. The City has requested technical assistance, as a top priority, in reviewing the existing contracts and re-issuing tenders in 1999. The USAID is considering funding this project in addition to the TA for the landfill operating plan, included in the second priority.

Student City: Also included in the first priority is a combined project in the Student City, including solid waste containers and upgrading of street lighting. The Student City is not included in the private collection contracts and is collected by the City, from concrete storage chambers and informal areas. These storage areas are a source of odors, insects and other health related problems. The proposed project would replace these with new metal storage containers. Security in the Student City is also a problem due to inadequate street lighting. This proposed project would repair existing lighting and install new lighting where needed. The project has been designed by the City and is awaiting funding. Although these two projects are considered the highest priorities in the Student City, there are many other infrastructure needs there, and a larger project, including roads, drainage, landscaping and dormitory rehabilitation should be considered in the future.

Seismic Institute Area: The Seismic Institute area was included in the Task I long list of projects as a road paving project. Further discussions with public works officials and an inspection of the area indicates that a more comprehensive approach should be taken, to include sewers and water system improvements. This area includes about 5,000 residents in high rise flats. Large open spaces exist between building which could be transformed into streets, parking and landscaping. The Task II priority includes both paving and sewers with an increased budget of \$200,000. A feasibility study is needed to determine the total infrastructure needs of the area.

Road Paving: Three road paving projects are included in the first level of City priorities. Since completing the Task I long list of projects, the Ministry of Public Works released funding for paving on Elbasani Road, the Ring Road and a portion of Ali Demi Road. As we complete Task II Elbasani Road is nearly complete and portions of the Ring Road have been paved. Only the

first 350 meters of Ali Demi road were paved. The remaining 1,800 meters of this major road requires a significant drainage upgrade before paving can begin.

Partial funding was also released by the Ministry of Public Works for Don Bosco Road. This funding covered only installation of storm drainage which has been a major problem in the past. A funding source is still needed for paving the road and restoration of sidewalks.

Second Priority: Second priority projects include a water project in the 21 December development, additional waste containers and collection truck upgrade, two road paving projects and four street lighting projects. The 21 December project was not on the Task I long list of projects but was added during Task II. The current project is a water upgrade project which has been included as a possible project for EU Phare LCDP funding. The project has been placed in the second priority category because there does not seem to be agreement within the City departments regarding the necessity for this project. A site inspection of this high-rise apartment area indicates a more comprehensive infrastructure project is needed, including drainage and paving as well as water upgrade.

Total Infrastructure Upgrade: The 21 December area is typical of several neighborhood areas where both Durres and Tirana are upgrading infrastructure one sector at a time rather than pursuing a more comprehensive approach. The 21 December project and the North planned development area in Durres are potential projects for a pilot program of total infrastructure upgrade. Although initial costs may be higher, the upgrading of all infrastructure sectors, water sewer, drainage and paving will be less costly in the long run.

3 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

3.1 Background

Local governments and citizens/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Albania currently have very little interaction. Mayors and city councils are elected on a partisan basis and find it difficult to carry out national party platforms in their local areas. Even progressive mayors who believe citizen participation is a key issue for making lasting infrastructure improvements are puzzled as to how to begin, viewing it as “theoretical.” Municipal staff and NGOs have expressed mutual frustration with fledgling attempts to partner; NGOs are often seen by local governments as lacking in direction or technical ability and NGOs, both foreign and local, believe municipalities’ inability to control illegal growth is undermining their projects.

There is a high level of squatting on government and private property and illegal taps into existing electric power and water lines has become commonplace. Legal residential areas comprised largely of multi-family apartment buildings are plagued with water leaks and sewer failure from aging or inadequate infrastructure. The concept of preserving shared local public space is alien; citizens prefer to put time and money into building their own housing or businesses.

Furthermore, the absence of a local public property law makes it difficult for authorities to undertake public education in this area.

City Councils typically meet once per month and are open to the public and the media. However, many citizens still assume that they need an invitation to attend and local officials fear that uncontrolled citizen access to meetings will cause chaos and overwhelm their facilities. If a majority of members agree, the City Council may also elect to discuss particular issues behind closed doors, with the exception of budget issues. In fact, much of the decision-making by elected officials takes place in meetings of permanent commissions comprised of members elected from the ranks of the City Council. Council Commissions deliberate all requests for action by the City Council in their technical area, e.g. budget, urban development, health and hygiene, and make recommendations to the full City Council. Technical experts and NGOs may also participate in an advisory capacity in Commission meetings. Issues raised by citizens are first reviewed by the relevant Council Commission to determine whether they should be placed on the City Council's agenda. Citizens can obtain a copy of the agenda for review from the Council Secretary.

Senior administrative staff in municipal departments responsible for public works and solid waste collection do not systematically involve citizens in planning infrastructure projects although residents' cooperation is essential for funding and maintaining improvements. In fact, staff from NGOs and participation-oriented projects in Albania stress that infrastructure improvements will only be sustainable if neighborhood residents and business owners play a substantive role. Participation of beneficiaries, either through monetary funding or in kind contributions, is vital to promoting ownership both in monitoring project implementation and long-term maintenance. At the same time, community residents are not always unified in their willingness or means for participating and local governments are very reluctant to mandate participation, particularly in informal settlements where asking residents to provide payment for services is tantamount to sanctioning illegal activity in residential and business areas.

3.2 Assessment of Current Situation

Given the wide range of technical assistance and training already underway in Albania, RTI's approach in completing short-term investment plans in a timely manner is to build on successful initiatives and methods of other contractors, NGOs, and the target cities themselves. The RTI team believes that a sub-purpose of this task is to disseminate information among the development community about current programs to increase opportunities for synergy as well as the pace of decentralization and capacity-building. In developing the citizen involvement methodology, the participation specialist gathered primary and secondary data on the current status of key programs working with local governments in Albania. The remainder of Section 3.2 provides a summary of activities for each organization, particularly as they relate to citizen involvement; a description of participation initiatives already underway in pilot cities of Tirana

and Durres; and a brief discussion of possible areas of cooperation for more effective and efficient use of resources.

3.2.1 Key Local Government Programs & Organizations

Public Administration Program in Albania (PAPA)

Since November 1995, the Public Administration Program in Albania (PAPA) under contract to Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) has been working to build local government capacity through institutionalization of processes vital to good governance. The project focuses on three major areas: (1) public management and administration, particularly in financial management and citizen participation, (2) economic development strategies and action plans, and (3) training, institution building, and information dissemination. The first year of the project, PAPA worked with five pilot cities jointly chosen by USAID, the Albanian Secretariat for Local Government, and PAPA project staff: Berat, Durres, Pogradec, Shkodra, and Vlore. Since then, four new cities, Tirana, Kucove, Lezhe, and Shijak, have been added to the program.

PAPA staff have used the technical assistance program to ascertain the most relevant training topics which have been addressed in a series of self-study materials for dissemination to local governments throughout Albania and for use in the training program. For example, monographs on public participation provide information on the responsibilities of city councils, the role of communication in democratic governance, and the relationship between local government and NGOs in creating and implementing effective public participation; where possible, monographs cite relevant Albanian legislation and provide recommendations for effective use of these laws to bring citizen opinion into local government decision-making. The purpose of the PAPA training program is to improve the capability of local officials to adapt and implement the processes and knowledge they have acquired during the course of the technical assistance program. Training of local government officials and staff is conducted in 1-2 day courses and involves Albanian training institutions and NGOs to improve sustainability.

PAPA's citizen participation activities are focused in Tirana, Durres, Pogradec, and Kucove. In Durres, PAPA has supported the Mayor's office in establishing a public education program and an initial printing of a brochure on the city's historical heritage. In addition, PAPA staff have advised the Mayor on media relations and assisted in the development of a strategic program for improving interaction between citizens and local government. The Mayor has recently appointed the city's first communication director who, as one of his first initiatives, has developed a communication plan for the municipality drawing from the PAPA local government guidebook on public communication.

PAPA staff have assisted the City of Tirana to collect data on citizen complaints, and to streamline and improve the complaint process. PAPA currently is working with Tirana staff

to implement a public information center in the city hall and to design and publish brochures for distribution through the center. Where possible, PAPA supports opportunities for cooperation between pilot cities, as in the potential collaboration of Durres and Kucove in the area of public education.

PAPA has held two roundtables in Tirana to explore how the working relationship between the local government and NGOs might be improved. As a result, the Albanian NGO Forum has agreed to distribute the agenda for each Tirana City Council meeting to all NGOs in the area. PAPA is also looking for opportunities to set up projects between specific NGOs and the City.

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) has been working in Albania since the country began its progression toward a democratic form of government in 1991 with multiparty elections. NDI has developed programs to educate both civil society and policy makers in understanding and fulfilling their roles in bringing about democratic reform. Initially, NDI assisted political leaders to draft a more accountable election law and, with support from USAID, conducted a training program for Parliamentarians.

In 1992, NDI helped to establish the Society for Democratic Culture (SDC), an Albanian civic group, comprised of teachers, workers, engineers, and students. SDC staff mobilized 2,000 citizens as observers at polling sites throughout the country and provided an independent vote count for the parliamentary elections in March of that same year. With 36 branches around the country, SDC has a broad base from which staff can conduct projects related to citizen education and promotion of effective communication between government and civic society, including:

- ? monitoring the media to ensure balanced coverage of political parties and agendas
- ? publishing information about local government services
- ? establishing student councils in high schools
- ? conducting nation-wide polls and public forums to inform policy and legislation

SDC conducted a national survey shortly before the local elections in the fall of 1996 regarding municipal infrastructure and services. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information about citizens' problems in meeting their basic needs, their priorities for repair or upgrading of infrastructure, and their confidence in local government to resolve their problems. The results of the survey were presented by SDC staff at a local government conference on public information. SDC also helped to organize a seminar attended by 40 representatives of city councils to discuss the involvement of citizens in council meetings and public hearings.

In 1998, NDI is developing a network of grassroots discussion groups in two pilot cities. This initiative is expected to provide the ordinary citizen with basic information on democratic

principles and practices. In addition, NDI is advising political leaders about strategies for public outreach and putting them in contact with their counterparts in other emerging democracies. Finally, NDI is working with the Ministry for Legislative Reform to provide regular public updates about the reform process and, through the efforts of the SDC, disseminating the results of public opinion polls on issues related to the revision of the national constitution.

Albania Urban Land Management Project

The purpose of the World Bank-funded Urban Land Management Project is to provide basic infrastructure and services to the most under serviced areas of selected Albanian cities. The project is divided into two phases: project mobilization and implementation. Under the mobilization phase, the first two pilot sites have been selected and prepared for participation in the program. The implementation phase includes entering into partnering agreements with pilot sites, designing and implementing infrastructure improvement plans, evaluating the results of project activities, and reworking the project for expansion in original and/or additional sites. In choosing pilot sites, the project is giving priority to communities that are willing to participate in the upgrading and maintenance of infrastructure either through monetary or in-kind contributions.

A key component of the Urban Land Management Project is the involvement of NGOs with expertise in community development to assist pilot neighborhoods in planning, problem-solving, and entering into dialogue with local authorities. The Co-Plan Center for Habitat Development, with the financial support of Cordaid (a Dutch development organization), is working with residents in the pilot sites of Breglumasi-Laprake and Bathore in Tirana. In addition, Co-Plan has supported project staff in preparing specific mobilization strategies for each pilot community and in determining the ability and willingness of residents to contribute to infrastructure improvements.

In Breglumasi-Laprake, Co-Plan helped residents to form a community association for the purpose of improving infrastructure. The association organized its activities around three main goals: (1) to develop a long-term understanding of the process of urban development, (2) to develop a concrete plan for their own area, and (3) to develop a means for fully integrating the area, currently an informal settlement, into the city. Initially, several meetings were held to introduce the purpose of the project as well as basic tenets of democratic representation. The area was divided into 29 subdivisions and a representative was chosen by the residents of each subdivision to serve, along with 8 board members, as the association's liaison with the local government. A project to widen the road from 3 to 8 meters and to add gravel has been implemented with the help of the association. Residents contributed space as needed from their housing plots and organized to provide labor to improve the road. The project provided materials and supported labor costs for construction.

In Bathore, Co-Plan staff first conducted meetings in the neighborhood to explain the objectives of the project and, with the support of the Albanian Civil Society Foundation, trained community leaders. Co-Plan also designed and administered a survey through interviews with a sample of residents. The survey gathered general information on household characteristics, family income, personal investment in housing or improvements, etc. as well as attitudinal data on priorities regarding infrastructure, investment, and location. The project hired municipal employees and local professionals to conduct interviews and Co-Plan staff tabulated the results. In the case of Bathore, 40-50% of residents indicated that they were not interested in participating in the project.

Co-Plan is in the process of developing a comprehensive survey of the whole Tirana urban area in order to better understand where project efforts should be concentrated for maximum benefit, i.e. in areas where participation of the community in upgrading and maintenance is assured. The survey would gather data on current solutions to infrastructure problems, attitudes regarding public space and communal housing, and modes of investment. Co-Plan hopes the questionnaire will also provide help in answering more complex questions of how to coordinate secondary and tertiary improvements, secure improvements, and enforce necessary fees for maintenance so that improvements are sustainable.

Strengthening Local Government and Citizen Participation in Albania Project

Funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this three-year project was initiated at the request of the Albanian Government in November of 1996. The goal of the project is to stimulate social and economic development in Albania by attention to three major areas: (1) improving the functioning of local governments, (2) increasing citizen participation in local government, and (3) strengthening non-governmental and community-based organizations. The project is being implemented by a consortium of Dutch and Albanian organizations committed to decentralization which include:

- ? International Project Unit of the Netherlands Municipal Association (VNG)
- ? Netherlands Organization for International Development Co-operation (NOVIB)
- ? Netherlands Development Organization (SNV)
- ? Albanian State Secretariat for Local Government (SSLG)
- ? Albanian Association of Mayors (AAM)
- ? Albanian NGO Forum

The project is providing both technical and material assistance within four project components. The first component focuses on a program of activities in four Albanian municipalities: Fier, Rreshen, Peshkopi, and Kruje. Programmed assistance to these pilot municipalities is intended to foster decentralization through improved functioning in particular development areas, such as citizen participation, urban planning, and local taxation. For example, VNG is assisting the City

of Kruje to develop an urban development plan which has broad based support and input from all major stakeholders, e.g. business owners, craftspeople, NGOs, and both established and new residents. Citizen participation is considered a vital part of the planning process and includes early meetings with NGOs, business leaders, and construction specialists; development and administration of a questionnaire for community residents; and public reporting of the results. Distributed through local NGOs and placement in newspaper stands, the questionnaire is being used to help determine the most pressing problems facing the city, which physical areas to consider for expansion, and how ready the general population is to participate in planned development. Kruje officials invited other Albanian municipalities to a one-day conference in mid-June 1998 to present information about the process to date and to stimulate discussion about its potential applicability to other cities.

Development staff working with the second and third components are implementing institutional strengthening activities for the SSLG and AAM as key players in the decentralization process, i.e. the SSLG is the national-level body responsible for monitoring decentralization progress; the AAM has a potential role as an intermediary between local and central government. The fourth component is designed to provide channels for local governments and citizen organizations to dialogue and develop possibilities for cooperation. Regional Development Agencies (RDA) have been established in Peshkopi and Fier as implementing vehicles for specific projects, training needs assessment, and delivery of training events for municipal officials, NGO staff, and leaders of community groups. Training topics are directly related to improving local governance, e.g. lobbying, environmental awareness, gender issues, and citizen participation.

3.2.2 Participation Initiatives in Pilot Cities

City of Tirana

Tirana officials are greatly concerned with the burden that increased migration has placed on the City's aging and inadequate infrastructure. In the previous five years, approximately 400,000 new residents have moved into the capital city. Although the city has made some investment in new electric and phone lines, there has been very minimal upgrading of water and sewer systems or roads. Spot improvement projects, such as paving of certain sections of city streets, have not addressed water leaks and other related problems which has led to unsustainable results. Currently, the most pressing issue facing city officials and staff are potential health risks from the close proximity and instability of water and sewer pipes.

The city is interested in tackling the infrastructure problems in a thorough and systematic way. In the most under served informal areas, infrastructure is virtually nonexistent; however, substantial legal and institutional barriers exist, such as settlement of migrants on privately owned property and illegal business construction, that make upgrading problematic, even if funds can

be procured. Notwithstanding these issues, the municipality desires to build collaboration between local government and citizens for implementing and maintaining good infrastructure.

Tirana is currently attempting to increase its visibility and interaction with citizens and NGOs. Municipal staff have attempted to organize meetings with NGOs in the city but this initiative has borne little fruit to date. The municipality has also developed a public information project that is being implemented by the Department of Personnel Organization and Services. The goal of the project is to increase the transparency of local government and to better inform citizens about its objectives and the results of its activities. Start up efforts include procurement of equipment for creating and disseminating information brochures and initial training of staff that have direct contact with citizens. The main project components include:

- ? development of an information brochure about the municipality
- ? collection of data for preparing information leaflets on the various city departments
- ? information presentations in the city hall for interested parties
- ? technical and financial assistance for the municipal newspaper
- ? improved functioning and training of city departments that develop citizen services

City of Durres

Durres has a mission to incorporate its informal areas into the mainstream of the city. However, there has been no direct dialogue to date between city staff and residents in these neighborhoods. Since about 1995, migrants from northern Albania have been steadily moving into the area, and the numbers are likely to swell as refugees from Kosovo make their way south.

The city has made an overt initiative to organize business people as partners in development. In 1997, city public works staff and the neighborhood's administrative unit invited business owners in the Shkozë Road area to a meeting to discuss their potential participation in an infrastructure upgrading project. At least 50% of the business owners agreed to cooperate with the city by co-financing the improvements. City staff prepared the technical design for the project and another meeting was scheduled when the civil unrest in March 1997 interrupted the initiative.

The Mayor of Durres has formed ten "Councils of Intellectuals" to provide technical support to city management. Each council has 6-10 members, some of which are municipal staff. Many council members bring expertise in various topics such as education, economics, sports, and arts/culture. Other councils are working specifically with problem areas for the city, including infrastructure, sanitation, transportation, and animal control. The Mayor has also invited highly visible and well respected leaders in the community to participate in a Town Elders Council, which provides advice on a number of matters to city officials.

The Mayor is very interested in public education and, under his leadership, the city is using the medium of local television to stage discussions between citizens and department heads. A pilot program is under development to sponsor a live broadcast from the city hall which will allow citizens to have direct phone conversations with officials about their most pressing problems or issues.

3.2.3 Opportunities for Synergy

The most promising areas of cooperation with other local government and citizen participation projects in Albania are:

- ? **Co-Plan survey of Tirana urban area.** This survey will include areas targeted by the city's short-term investment plan. One objective of the survey, to determine which residents are most positive about participating in infrastructure improvement, is important knowledge for the municipality in prioritizing projects and creating models of citizen/local government cooperation. Some municipal staff also worked previously on a Co-Plan survey in the Breglumasi-Laprake area.
- ? **VNG Urban Development Planning project in Kruje.** This model could be applied to Tirana or Durres and involve the PAPA project, particularly regarding its economic development and citizen participation components. Although urban planning has a scope beyond that of the short-term investment plan, it makes sense for the latter to be integrated in a meaningful way into any longer-term development programs in pilot cities.
- ? **Regional Development Agencies (RDA) in Peshkopi and Fier.** The RDAs have been established to deliver project assistance and training for increasing dialogue between local government and citizen organizations. We can evaluate the successes, problems, and lessons learned by the RDAs to inform the creation of communication linkages for prioritizing short-term investment plans in Tirana and Durres.
- ? **Albanian Association of Mayors and Albanian NGO Forum.** These organizations can be supported in developing mechanisms for disseminating case studies to non-pilot municipalities and NGOs across the country.

3.3 Citizen Participation Strategy

Key to creating an enabling environment for well-designed, timely, and participatory implementation of municipal infrastructure projects is building capacity in both local governments and civil society and creating communication linkages so that informed interaction can occur. In order for dialogue between local government and its constituents to be fruitful,

citizens need to have both an understanding of how local government functions as well as a general knowledge of the city's plans for infrastructure upgrading in their area.

In addition, citizens need to have considered what their own responsibilities are and how they might contribute to improving their neighborhoods. Local governments will not be viewed as accountable managers of public funds until they work together with citizens and business owners to set and enforce necessary fees, taxes, and practices for maintaining infrastructure improvements.

Local governments will be better prepared to interact with citizens in an open forum if they first engage in lower risk participation strategies. Currently, public hearings are not a popular means of information transfer between elected officials and citizens in Albania. However, local government staff do see the value in getting specific feedback on technical or financial issues, for example, by having citizens participate in monthly City Council Commission meetings or organizing special meetings for NGOs or business owners. Public information campaigns and attitudinal surveys can also be used by local governments to improve the knowledge level of citizens and to gather preliminary data about citizen preferences. With good preparation on both

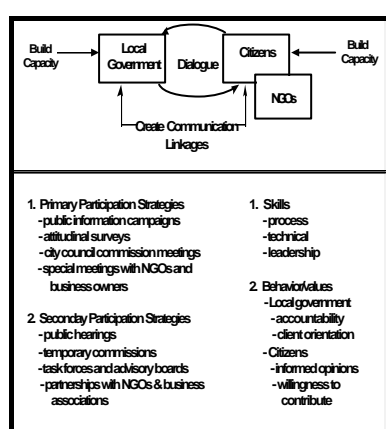


Figure 1: RTI Citizen Participation Strategy for Albania

sides, public meetings can become an effective vehicle for involving citizens in decision-making and increasing their confidence in local government accountability rather than just a complaint session. As citizens begin to perceive that their input is being used in investment decisions, they will be more willing to participate in public meetings. As community leaders emerge, they can be tapped by municipal officials to serve on task forces and advisory boards.

RTI's participation strategy is two-pronged. Phase 1 focuses on the processes of building local government capacity for effective participation and improving the visibility of local governments in communities targeted by short-term investment plans. Development of a collaborative

working relationship between the participation specialist and local government counterparts is vital to the success of the first phase and necessary preparation for the second phase. Phase 2 builds on the confidence and process knowledge attained by local government counterparts during Phase 1 to create communication linkages. The use of a strategy that addresses both process and technical aspects of participation will help to build trust between pilot local governments and their constituents to achieve positive, direct dialogue with citizens regarding infrastructure and basic services.

3.4 Implementation Status

3.4.1 Phase 1: Building the Capacity and Visibility of Local Governments

From June 9 - 20, the RTI participation specialist worked with administrative staff in Tirana and Durres to develop a pre-test survey for selected residential or business areas included on each city's list of short-term investments. Development and implementation of a survey questionnaire fulfilled three important processes during Phase 1:

- ? creating a working relationship between RTI and the targeted local governments
- ? strengthening local governments' expertise in the area of citizen participation
- ? increasing the visibility of the local government in areas of each pilot city targeted for infrastructure improvement

The main objectives of the survey as seen by both cities were to: (1) make citizens aware that the local government intends to improve infrastructure and is interested in the opinions of those affected by the upgrading projects, and (2) gather preliminary information on how citizens in specific areas might contribute to infrastructure improvement. An introduction to each survey provided information about the local government's mission in addressing infrastructure problems, its desire to collaborate with citizens in infrastructure improvement projects, and the purpose of the survey. Survey questionnaires for Tirana and Durres are presented in Appendix 4.

In Tirana, the Director of the Department of Personnel Organization, and Services, a public information staff person, and the RTI participation specialist developed two questionnaires, one for use in formal residential areas and the other in informal areas. Research staff from the Society for Democratic Cultures administered the survey to a small random sample of residents in 4 areas (3 informal settlements and 1 planned residential neighborhood), analyzed the responses, and provided a written report of survey results to the city and to the RTI participation specialist. Survey questions were designed to capture citizens' views on local government's role in infrastructure provision, their infrastructure priorities, and their willingness and preferred method for becoming involved in project implementation. Tirana officials expect to use preliminary citizen preference data to compare the readiness of residents in different areas of the city to collaborate with the local government in infrastructure upgrading and maintenance.

In Durres, the participation specialist worked with the Mayor's chief of cabinet to complete a participation initiative begun by the city a year ago. A survey questionnaire was developed for small business owners located in a commercial section of the city needing improvements in sewer connections, solid waste collection, and street lighting. City staff administered the survey to 23 business owners as part of a meeting organized to discuss proposed improvements. Survey questions addressed respondents' infrastructure priorities, their willingness and preferred method for becoming involved in project implementation, and their interest in engaging in dialogue with the local government either individually or as part of a business association. Based on the survey results, the city can move to the next stage of project planning.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Project Development and Funding

During the next phase (Task 3) of the Short-term Investment Project in Tirana and Durres the activities of the project team associated with the development and funding of prioritized projects shall focus on a continuous monitoring of progress in identified donor programs development and on active pursuit of opportunities for further funding of the identified and prioritized projects.

As the citizens participation component is gaining its momentum in receiving community inputs on support in infrastructure projects prioritization and acceptance, an update of the prioritized infrastructure investment lists developed under Task 2 may become necessary and if so shall be completed under Task 3 of the project.

4.1.1 Specific activities to be completed under Task 3

The most specific upcoming activities of the project team arise from the following developments:

1. Two water projects, in Kamza are proceeding the implementation with EU ECHO funding. Upon completion of the preliminary design the project team should facilitate tendering and construction supervision on behalf of the City of Tirana.
2. Several donor programs are scheduled for start-up in the next few months. The most urgent is the EU Cross Border Cooperation Program (CBC). The project team should facilitate negotiations between the City of Durres and CBC to reallocate the funding in this program to include the construction of all or a portion of the Ring Road.
3. The EU "Improved Tirana" Local Community Development Program (LCDP) will begin this fall. Although some projects have already been identified for the program, such as 21

December, the project team should continue to work with LCDP and ADF in identifying projects for this program.

4. The Italian Cooperation Fund is expected to begin implementing two new programs in the near future. The project team should continue its dialogue with the Italians to identify projects for these programs. The special emphasis should be placed on promoting implementation of the sewer projects in both of the pilot cities as those appear to have highest municipal priorities.

In addition to interacting with the proposed programs listed above, the project team should continue meeting with the two cities and all donors on a periodic basis throughout the duration of the contract to maintain an update of project priorities and continue matching projects to donor programs as opportunities arise.

4.2 Citizen Participation

Under Task 3 of the project the citizen participation specialist will concentrate on implementation of a Phase 2 of the citizen participation program strategy which entails obtaining of specific citizens input for short-term investment plans in Tirana and Durres.

4.2.1 Phase 2: Citizen Input for Short- Term Investment Plans

The RTI participation specialist will work with established counterparts in Tirana and Durres to implement one of the following strategies in Phase 2. Where appropriate, RTI will build on the successful initiatives of other projects described in Section 3.2.1.

4.2.1.1 *Citizen Survey of Populations Targeted for Infrastructure Improvements*

RTI will collaborate with pilot local governments and NGOs, such as the Society for Democratic Culture, Co-Plan, or the National Housing Institute, to revise and expand the citizen input questionnaire based on results of the pre-test survey from Phase 1. The team will develop a methodology for sampling the resident population in areas of each pilot city where upgrading has a high level of interest from both donors and the municipalities. The NGO will administer the questionnaire and tabulate the results. A representative from the NGO and the RTI participation specialist will jointly present the results to local government officials. RTI will develop a written report for dissemination to USAID, the NGO Forum, contractors working on citizen participation in Albania, and the Albanian Association of Mayors. In Tirana, the survey of areas targeted for

infrastructure improvement might be conducted as part of the proposed Co-Plan city-wide survey (see Section 3.2.1)

4.2.1.2 *Dialogue between Local Government and Citizens*

Using the results of the pre-test surveys, RTI will assist elected officials and city staff in pilot municipalities to facilitate a special Commission meeting, public hearing, or interactive television program to promote direct dialogue between area residents and local government officials about implementation of high-interest projects in the short-term investment plan. Prior to the meeting, the participation specialist will work with counterparts to develop and disseminate technical information on the infrastructure projects contained in short-term investment plans through public information mechanism already in place in each city. RTI will develop a written report for dissemination to USAID, the NGO Forum, contractors working on citizen participation in Albania, and the Albanian Municipal Association.

4.3 Recommendations for Future Assistance

1. The positive impact of the short-term investment program for Tirana and Durres has already reached beyond those two cities. The objectives and early achievements of the program have met a strong interest among other Albanian municipalities. In particular the mayors of Elbasan and of Korce have stressed their strong desire to replicate the project methodology at their municipalities. Aside from obvious practical benefits to the proposed new municipalities and an increased impact of intervention, spreading of the program into two additional pilot cities would help achieve much greater visibility in the eyes of potential donors as well as local government organizations and NGOs thus improving the potential for project's long term sustainability. It is recommended that the program gets extended to cover the development of short-term investment plans for the municipalities of Elbasan and Korce. This additional task if authorized shall be carried out in conjunction with the citizen participation strategy implementation as defined earlier in this report.
2. Case studies with associated training materials on prioritized short-term investment programs development and funding along with effective citizen participation examples focusing on one area in each pilot city where successful infrastructure upgrading has been accomplished shall be developed. Pilot municipalities can use the case studies to promote these areas as a "models of improvement" to elicit support in other communities. Case studies should also be disseminated to other Albanian municipalities interested in developing strategies for sustainable infrastructure improvement.

3. As follow-up to Phase 2 of the Citizen Participation Component, the RTI participation specialist should assist the City of Durres to create a citizen infrastructure advisory board to provide local officials with systematic public input as they implement their short-term investment plan. The structure of the board will be similar to the Mayor's Councils of Intellectuals but membership will be diversified to reflect a broad cross section of citizens with a stake in infrastructure improvement across the city. As the short-term investment plan is implemented, board members can monitor and evaluate individual projects and assist the City in publicizing its successful partnering with citizens in infrastructure upgrading and long-term maintenance.
4. RTI will provide support to urban planning efforts already underway in Tirana through the Urban Institute contract. Drawing on the success of the urban planning project in Kruje, RTI will work with the Director of Tirana's Urban Planning Department to develop a strategy for soliciting input from major stakeholders for inclusion in the urban planning process.

5 NEXT STEPS

The Next Steps in Short-term Infrastructure Project Implementation at the Cities of Tirana and Durres relate to activities defined in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this report and comprise Task 3 of the Project. The following tables define personnel, level of effort and projected timeframe completion of Task 3 activities.

5.1 Project Development and Funding

Name	Affiliation	LOE Planning	LOE Field Work	Timeframe
Christopher Kaczmariski	RTI	3 days	6 days	8/31 - 9/6
		2 days	6 days	10/26 - 10/31
Infrastructure Engineer (Replacement of Jim Dohrman)	RTI	3.5 days	14 days	10/26 - 11/10
Edlir Vokopola	UI		25 days	8/31 - 12/31
Edi Joxhi	UI		15 days	8/31 - 12/31

Infrastructure Engineer	Local Consultant		20 days	10/26 - 12/31
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Planning: Evaluation of project implementation progress; assessment of donor programs development; scheduling of activities; USAID meetings and reports finalization

Field Work:

Week 1: Meetings with Municipalities; meetings with donors; identification of additional project development and funding opportunities and project packaging requirements

Week 2 -3: Infrastructure project development work (Conditional upon positive identification of need)

Week 4- 17: Local UI staff: follow-up with the donors; follow-up with municipalities; supervision of project packaging carried out by local consultants and municipal personnel; semiweekly reporting.

5.2 Citizen Participation

Phase 2: Citizen Input for Short-Term Investment Plans

Name	Affiliation	LOE Planning	LOE Field Work	Timeframe
Brenda Linton	RTI	5 days	18 days	8/31 - 9/26
Edi Joxhi	UI	2 days	4 days	8/31 - 9/26
Gjergji Memo	DSC/RTI		10 days	9/7 - 9/26
Dezdemona Haibib	City of Dures		4 days	9/7 - 9/26
Communications Director	City of Dures		10 days	9/7 - 9/26
Erind Kraja	City of Tirana		4 days	9/7 - 9/26
Rita Dangelia	City of Tirana		10 days	9/7 - 9/26

Planning: Discussion with other contractors (Linton); feasibility discussions with counterparts about next activity (Joxhe); decision regarding Phase 2 activity

Field work

Week 1: Meetings with contractors; planning with counterparts in each pilot city; advertising

Week 2: Training/team building; meetings logistics implementation or development of survey

Week 3: Execution of survey or meeting; follow-up with counterparts; draft report

APPENDIX A

CITY OF TIRANA: SHORT-TERM INVESTMENT PROJECT SUMMARY - June 1998

FIRST PRIORITY

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Sewer	Clean Existing System	Deferred Maintenance	None Identified	Equipment \$800,000 TA \$100,000	Identified as number one city priority. Needs include equipment, TA and system mapping update.
Sewer	Kodra Priftit - Collector Sewer Extensions	Design Completed 1996 Needs update to 1998	None Identified	\$187,000	Large informal area. Some neighborhood systems. Small pipes.
Water Supply	Kamza Supply Pipeline	Under design by Water Enterprise & USAID	Scheduled for ECHO Funding	\$100,000	Improve supply to Kamza storage tank. Improve service to 30,000.

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Water Supply	Laknas Distribution Pipeline	Design Complete, ready for implementation	Scheduled for ECHO Funding	\$40,000	Increase flow from Laknas well field & pumping station.
Water Supply	Equipment, pipe, valves and repair fittings.	List of needs completed and distributed.	Being considered by Italian Corp.	\$100,000	Improve inventory and emergency response capacity.
Solid waste	Waste Collection Contracting - TA	Existing contracts expire in 1999	Being considered by USAID.	\$50,000	Existing private collection contracts require revision.
Solid waste Lighting	Student City	Conceptual	None Identified	\$30,000 Solid Waste \$32,000 Lighting	Rapidly deteriorating conditions in the Student City Campus.
Paving and Sewer	Seismic Institute Area	Preliminary design completed by City	None Identified	\$200,000	Area needs full infrastructure upgrade, water, sewer & paving. 5,000 residents in high rise flats.
Roads	Elbasani Road	Paving has begun	Funded by City	\$110,000	Project implemented by City

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Roads	Ring Road	Paving has begun	Funded by City	\$150,000	Project implemented by City
Roads	Ali Demi Road - Drainage and Paving	Partial paving completed June 98	Funded by City	\$200,000 Additional required for drainage and paving.	350 meters paved by City, June 98. 1,800 meters remain. Drainage and paving.
Roads and Sewer	Don Bosco Road - Drainage and Paving	Preliminary Design	Drainage Funding by MOPW	\$120,000 additional for drainage & paving	Partial drainage being installed June 98.
TOTAL FIRST PRIORITY				\$2,219,000	

SECOND PRIORITY

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Water	21 December	Preliminary Design	Scheduled for EUPhare, LCDP	\$200,000	Street paving and sewer upgrade also needed

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Solid Waste	Containers, Truck	Equipment	None Identified	\$90,000	New containers and truck upgrade for City Collection
Solid Waste	Landfill Upgrade	TA Proposal	Being considered by USAID	\$300,000	Interim operating plan and physical improvements.
Roads	Durres Road Paving	Pavement Overlay	None identified	\$80,000	Pave City center to Ring Road
Roads	Kavije Road	Pavement Overlay	None identified	\$96,000	Pave City center to Ring Road
Lighting	Durres Road	Design by City	None identified	\$85,000	Street lighting upgrade
Lighting	Main Square	Design by City	None Identified	\$25,000	Street lighting upgrade
Lighting	River channel	Design by City	None Identified	\$165,000	Street lighting upgrade
Lighting	Main Boulevard	Design by City	None Identified	\$285,000	Maintenance & replacement
TOTAL	SECOND PRIORITY			\$1,326,000	

TOTAL TIRANA PROJECTS	\$3,545,000
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APPENDIX B

CITY OF DURRES - SMALL INVESTMENT PROJECT SUMMARY - June 1998

FIRST PRIORITY

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Roads	Ring Road	Design being completed	Potential Funding EUPhare, CBC	\$350,000	Needs reconstruction, drainage in several section.
Sewer	Sewer Cleaning	Equipment and TA	None identified	Equipment \$300,000 TA \$80,000	System suffers from deferred maintenance, lack of system map.
Roads	Entrance Road	Preliminary design	Scheduled for EU Phare, CBC	\$370,000	Requires pavement overlay and drainage improvements.

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Sewer	Sewer Extensions	Preliminary design	None Identified	\$23,000	Sewer extensions to serve informal & formal development in North area
Solid Waste	City Cleaning	City Program	None identified	\$155,300	Jobs program prepared by city to clean parks, beaches and public areas. 3 month duration
Roads, Water	Shkozet Industrial Road	Preliminary design	None identified	Paving \$145,000 Water \$20,000	Potential business sharing, May also require sewer upgrade.
TOTAL FIRST PRIORITY				\$1,443,300	

SECOND PRIORITY

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Roads	North area extension	Preliminary Design	None Identified	\$115,000	Connect Phase II of the Ring Road to formal housing area and stadium.
Roads	Tower Square	Pavement Overlay	None Identified	\$10,500	Potential business sharing.
Roads	North Beach Extension	Preliminary Design	None identified	\$45,000	High visibility area, access to public facilities.
Sewer	Downtown Sewer	Pipe replacement	None identified	\$10,000	Short section of sewer totally blocked near post office and market
Water	Kavije Distribution Pipeline	Preliminary Design by Water Enterprise.	None identified	\$120,000	Remove connections from supply pipeline. Use surplus pipe.
TOTAL	SECOND PRIORITY			\$300,500	

THIRD PRIORITY

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Planning	Sea Wall Repair	Preliminary Design	None identified	\$90,000	Repair and extend sea wall in downtown near Tower Square.
Planning	Computer Equipment	Equipment Purchase	None identified	\$20,000	Planning Dept. Has only limited access for computer mapping.
Planning	Swimming Facility	Repair and Maintenance	None identified	\$60,000	Public swimming pools need major repairs and upgrading.
Planning	Amphitheater	Repairs, Upgrade	None identified	\$45,000	Outdoor theater near beach area, needs repair and upgrade.
Greening	Entrance Road	Design by City	None identified	\$12,000	Replace old trees
Greening	Commercial Street City hall to Tower Sq.	Design by City	None identified	\$16,000	Replace old trees.
Greening	City Hall to Sport Palace	Design by City	None identified	\$25,000	New trees and planters

Sector	Project Title	Technical Status	Funding Status	Current Estimate \$	Comments
Greening	Sport Palace to Stadium Park	Design by City	None identified	\$47,000	New trees and planters.
Greening	<u>Parks</u> - Stadium Park, North Beach Tower Square Railway Station	Design by City	None identified	\$50,000	New plantings, landscaping in City parks and public areas.
TOTAL THIRD PRIORITY				\$150,000	
TOTAL DURRES PROJECTS				\$1,893,800	

APPENDIX C

**DRAFT LETTER FROM MAYOR OF DURRES
TO CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (CBC) PROGRAM**

Gentlemen:

As you are aware, there are several large infrastructure projects scheduled to begin in the City of Durres and the surrounding region in the next few months. Most of these projects have been planned for several years based on City and regional needs with priorities established primarily by the national government. Although most of these priorities remain justified, there have been many changes in the City of Durres in the last few years which should be considered as we begin to implement these projects.

During the first two years of my administration, we have seen dramatic growth in the northern sections of the City. This has taken place in both formal and informal development. One of the highest priorities of this administration is to incorporate these areas into the social and economic life of the City. This process must first begin with infrastructure. The City has proposed the reconstruction of a portion of local roads in this area to form a "Ring Road" as the first step in integrating this community into the City. In addition to providing vehicle and emergency access to this new area, the "Ring Road" will ease traffic flow in the downtown area. Since this development is relatively recent, the "Ring Road" has not been included in any of the major donor programs which were established in the 1995-96 time period. I have attached a location map which shows the location of the "Ring Road".

The USAID has been working with the City to establish priorities for short-term, high impact projects. This process has identified the "Ring Road" as one of the City's highest priorities. The USAID review has also identified several EU projects scheduled to begin in the fall of 1998. These include the highway interchange for the Tirana-Durres highway, reconstruction of the Port of Durres, and two Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) projects, the Durres entrance road and the ferry terminal access road.

It is our understanding, working with USAID, that the ferry terminal road has now been integrated into the Highway Interchange and port projects, which may result in excess resources within the CBC program for another project. The City of Durres would like to propose using these resources to include the "Ring Road" in the upcoming CBC program.

As I have stated above, there have been many changes in Durres over the past two years, including City funded improvements to the entrance road, such as drainage and pavement repairs. The City suggests that before proceeding with the final design of the Durres CBC projects, a technical review should be performed and updated priorities established. The City, with the

assistance of USAID has already begun this process. We invite the CBC and the Albanian Development Foundation (ADF) to join us in this process to the mutual benefit of the program and the City. It is our goal to review these projects and their common features and re-allocate resources so that all or a portion of the “Ring Road” can be included in the Fall 1998 CBC program.

The City and USAID hope to complete our initial review in the next few weeks. We would like to suggest a meeting with all parties in the near future at City Hall to discuss these issues and our mutual concerns for the city of Durres.